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A DISSERTATION

UPON

FUNERAL ORATIONS,

READ AT THE

ISLINGTON LITERARY INSTITUTION,

BY

ALFRED A. FRY, Esq.

OF LINCOLN'S INN.

"La Religion a fait naitre parmi nous un autre genre d'Eloquence, qui, considéré seulement sous le rapport du goût, n'est pas moins riche pour le talent, ni moins favourable à ces mouvemens de l'ame qui font le grand Orateur."—M. VILLEMAIN.

"Man was made to mourn."—BURNS.

LONDON:
HENRY HOOPER, PALL MALL, EAST.

1839.

LONDON; PRINTED BY A. HANCOCK,
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TO

JOHN J. J. SUDLOW, ESQ.

A VICE-PRESIDENT OF THE

ISLINGTON LITERARY INSTITUTION,

AND

ONE OF ITS FOUNDERS,

THIS DISSERTATION

IS

DEDICATED,

WITH EVERY SENTIMENT OF ESTEEM,

BY THE AUTHOR,

ONCE HIS PUPIL, AND NOW

HIS SINCERELY ATTACHED FRIEND.

The Dissertation now printed, was lately read by the Author at the Literary Meeting of the Islington Institution; and the reception there given to it, tempts him to introduce it to the public notice.

In the interesting debate which took place upon it, the object of the author was misunderstood to be a desire to advocate the revival of an old, or the introduction of a new, practice of delivering Funeral Orations. But no such design induced the Dissertation. The author is fully aware of the distinctions which exist between this country and those in which the practice has prevailed. His object really and merely was to point the attention of his hearers (as now of his readers) to an interesting, but little examined, department of Eloquence; historically to deduce, and practically to explain, the origin and effects among men, of the custom of Posthumous Panegyric; and to present specimens of the treasures which exist in this peculiar portion of Literature. He humbly ventures to think the task may be a useful one, as no critical work upon Funeral Eloquence exists in our language. Dr. Campbell, and Dr. Blair, in their respective Treatises on Rhetoric, touch it not. The last-named of these elegant writers, indeed, devotes two chapters of his work to Pulpit Eloquence; but they are confined to judicious instructions for the delivery of Sermons, properly so called.

Chancery Lane,
February, 1839.

A DISSERTATION

UPON

FUNERAL ORATIONS.

An earnest anxiety for posthumous reputation is natural to man. In the greatest spirits it is an enthusiastic passion, which animates them to the most glorious deeds, and induces them to sacrifice even life itself to indulge it. "For "if," says one in whose breast it reigned with almost sovereign sway, in the most philosophical oration of antiquity,* "the mind had no regard for futurity, and bounded its "thoughts by the same limits within which the space of "life is circumscribed, it would not weary itself with so "many labours, nor vex itself with so many cares and "watchings. But there is implanted in every excellent "man a virtuous principle, which animates his soul day "and night with the excitement of glory, and whispers to "him that the mention of our name will not cease with the "short period of life, but will endure through all after-ages." And in later times, one even greater than he, Lord Bacon, in his splendid work, "The Advancement of Learning,"† (which should be read by every person who wishes to see the highest possible combination of the "universality" of a philosopher, the knowledge of a scholar, and the imagination of a poet,) has observed, that "that whereunto man's

* Cicero pro Archiâ. "Certe, si nihil animus præsentiret in posterum, et si "quibus regionibus vitæ spatium circumscriptum sit, eisdem omnes cogitationes "terminaret suas; nec tantis se laboribus frangeret, neque tot curis vigiliisque "angeretur. Nunc insidet quædam in optimo quoque virtus, quæ noctes et "dies animum *gloriæ stimulis concitat;* atque admonet, non cum vitæ tempore "esse dimittendam commemorationem nominis nostri, sed *cum omni posteritate* "*adæquandam.*"

† Book I.

" nature doth most aspire is immortality or continuance; " to which tendeth the desire of memory, fame, and cele- " bration." By this principle, the Lawgivers and Statesmen, the Philosophers and Orators of antiquity were strongly animated; and hence their " memory immortal grew."— But even in lesser men it operates with power. We find it displayed and acted upon in the earliest annals of our race. The Egyptians passed solemn judgment on their dead,* and only permitted the rites of burial after a scrutinizing examination into the character of the deceased. On those who were deemed worthy of interment by the judges of the State, panegyrics were pronounced, which referred to their personal merit; and afterwards the people besought the Gods to receive them into the assembly of the Just, and to admit them to partake of everlasting felicity. From this scrutiny not even kings were exempt; and this portion of the custom was imitated by the Israelites, as we read in Scripture that bad sovereigns were not interred in the monuments of their ancestors. The earliest Funeral Oration, too, extant, is to be found in the Sacred volume; I refer to the touching lamentation by David over Saul and Jonathan.†

" The beauty of Israel is slain upon thy high places; how are the mighty fallen! Tell it not in Gath, publish it not in the streets of Askelon; lest the daughters of the Philistines rejoice, lest the daughters of the uncircumcised triumph! Ye mountains of Gilboa, let there be no dew, neither let there be rain upon you, nor fields of offerings; for there the shield of the mighty is vilely cast away, the shield of Saul, as though he had not been anointed with oil. From the blood of the slain, from the fat of the mighty, the bow of Jonathan turned not back, and the sword of Saul returned not empty. Saul and Jonathan were lovely and pleasant in their lives, and in their deaths they were not divided. They were swifter than eagles, they were stronger than lions. Ye daughters of Israel, weep over Saul, who clothed you in scarlet, with other delights, and put on ornaments of gold upon your apparel. How are the mighty fallen in the midst of the battle! Oh! Jonathan, thou wast slain in thine high places! I am distressed for thee, my brother Jonathan, very pleasant hast thou been unto me. Thy love to me was

* The assembly of the judges met on the side of a lake, which they crossed in a boat; he who sat at the helm was called, in the Egyptian language, *Charon*; hence the Greek mythological fiction of that redoubted personage.

† 2 Samuel, ch. i, ver. 17.

wonderful, passing the love of women. How are the mighty fallen, and the weapons of war perished!"*

Among the Greeks, the influence of Fame was extremely strong. It was almost the very life-blood of the State.—Unanimated by the hopes inspired into us by Christianity, and untaught the awful responsibility of each individual, the feeling of personality was merged in the sentiment of citizenship. Death (deprived of the terrors arising from the consciousness of a future judgment) was held a minor evil compared with a life of dishonour, while public opinion in a small community of freemen was omnipotent. Hence the sacrifice at Thermopylæ, hence the victory of Platæa! "For," says Demosthenes, in the most celebrated passage of ancient eloquence, "*all* those illustrious sons of "Athens whose remains lie deposited in the public monu-"ments, *all* received the same honourable interment from "their country, and not only they who were victorious. "What was the part of gallant men, they all performed; "their success was such as the Gods dispensed to each."† It was by this passion of Fame (excited to a degree unknown before or since in any other country) that Greece attained her proud pre-eminence among nations. That glorious country felt and acted upon the truth so nobly expressed in the Inscription on the monument of Lord Chatham,‡ that, "the means by which Providence raises a na-"tion to greatness, are the virtues inspired into great men; "and that to withhold from those virtues, either of the "living or the dead, the tribute of esteem and admiration, "is to deny to itself the means of happiness and honour." The apotheosis of her heroes made every man a warrior; her splendid statues inspired those virtues of which they were the memorial and the result; and the Public Interments and Funeral Orations decreed to her patriots, caused

* This exquisite lamentation is indelibly impressed with associations of a pleasing melancholy on the minds, not only of all who admire eloquence, but of every lover of music, by the magnificent harmony to which it has been united by Handel, in the Oratorio of Saul.

† Oration on the Crown. Leland's Translation.

‡ In the Guildhall of the city of London. It was written, I believe, by Edmund Burke.

the blood of every Athenian to quicken at the mention of the name of Marathon !*

The most interesting Greek Funeral Oration which has been preserved to us, is the celebrated one pronounced by Pericles, on the Athenians who fell during the first year of the Peloponesian war.† Whether the great speech attributed to him by the historian of that struggle, was really delivered by Pericles, or whether, as is more probable, it now appears not in his splendid style, but with the severe cast of that of Thucydides, we know not; but there can be no doubt that *some* Oration was delivered on that interesting occasion. I shall present before you a specimen of so famous a speech, which has received the panegyrics of two thousand years. We are informed by Rollin, (quoting Thucydides) that at this public funeral, "according to an- "cient custom, the Greeks set up, three days before, a tent, "in which the bones of the deceased citizens were exposed, "and every person strewed flowers, incense, perfumes, and "other things of the same kind upon their remains. They "afterwards were put on carriages, in coffins made of cy- "press wood, every tribe having its particular coffin and "carriage; but in one carriage a large empty coffin was "placed in honour of those whose bodies had not been found. "The procession marched with a grave, majestic, and reli- "gious pomp; a great number of both citizens and foreign- "ers assisting at the mournful solemnity. The relations of "the deceased warriors stood weeping at the sepulchre. "Their bones were carried to a public monument in the "finest suburb of the city, called the Ceramicus, where "were buried in all ages those who lost their lives in war, "except the warriors of Marathon; who, to immortalize "their rare valour, were interred in the field of battle. "Earth was afterwards laid on them; and then Pericles "went from the Sepulchre to the Tribunal and pronounced

* "And Marathon became a magic word!"—Childe Harold, canto 2.

† The twenty-third book of the Iliad describes the Funeral rites of Patroclus: they consist of sacrifices and games; but no Oration was pronounced over the dead. Achilles *prays*, and invokes the spirit of Patroclus; but neither he nor any of the Grecian chiefs address the army on the merits of their lost champion. I suppose that at this early period in Greece, the practice of pronouncing Funeral Orations had not commenced.

" the Funeral Oration. After having paid, in so solemn a " manner, the double tribute of tears and applause to the " memory of those brave soldiers who had sacrificed their " lives to defend the liberties of their country; the public, " who did not confine their gratitude to empty ceremonies " and tears, maintained their widows and all their infant " orphans. This," adds Rollin, " was a powerful incentive " to animate the courage of the citizens; *for great men are " formed where merit is best rewarded.*"* Pericles commences his Speech by describing the flourishing state of Athens; and then excites his hearers to an emulation of the conduct of those who had been just solemnly interred, and by the exertions of whom, and of similar men, the city had attained its glory.

" Such is the city for which these men, valiantly fighting, have died. And it is fit that every man of you, that are left, should be like-minded to undergo any labour for it. For what I have described of the city, has by these and such as these been achieved. Even such of them as were worse than the rest, do nevertheless deserve that for their valour shewn in the wars for the defence of their country, they should be preferred before the rest. For having by their good actions abolished the memory of their evil, they have profited the State thereby more than they have injured it by their private behaviour. Such were these men, worthy of their country; and for you that remain, you may pray for a safer fortune, but you ought not to be less venturously minded against the enemy; not weighing the profit of an Oration only, which any man amplifying, may recount to you that know as well as he the many advantages that arise by fighting valiantly against your enemies; but contemplating the power of the city in the actions from day to day performed there, and thereby becoming enamoured of it. And when this power of the city shall seem great to you, reflect that it was created by valiant men, by men that knew their duty, and were sensible of dishonour when in fight; and by men who though they failed in their attempt, yet would not be wanting to the city with their virtue, but made of it a most honourable contribution. For having every one given his body to the commonwealth, they receive in return an undying glory, and a most remarkable sepulchre; *not wherein they are buried so much, as wherein their fame is laid up, upon all occasions to be remembered for ever. For to famous men all the earth is a sepulchre;* and their virtues will be testified, not only by inscriptions at home, but by an unwritten record of the mind, which more than any monument, will treasure up their memory."†

* Ancient History [Persians and Grecians], vol. ii, ch. 3, sec. 1. i, 494.

† Hobbes's Translation of Thucydides. Book II.

This Funeral Oration was a most remarkable one; but Orations of that nature were frequent in Greece. Cicero at the end of the 2nd book of his Treatise "on Laws," gives an interesting summary historical account of them, and says that at the feasts which followed the rites of burial, the dead were praised, *if they deserved it;* for it was *held wicked to utter falsehoods* on such occasions.*

Funeral Orations were in use among the Romans, although it would seem that they were reserved for illustrious men. The existence of the custom is familiar to all of you, from the celebrated speech of Anthony, in which he took advantage of the opportunity of bewailing Cæsar to arouse the people against Brutus. It was early imitated by the Christians. Some of the Funeral Sermons or Orations of the Fathers are now extant. They have been well analyzed by one of the first living French literary critics, M. Villemain; and he has eloquently explained the sources of their interest. He says,† "The religious character impressed upon these "panegyrics, appears one of the causes of their superiority; "and not only as respects piety, but good taste. The eulo- "gium of a man who has ceased to exist, requires to be sus- "tained by the hopes of another life. Does all finish with "death? Have you nothing to teach us and to promise us on "the future destiny of him whom you lament? Of what avail "were so many virtues, if they end in nothing? If you desire "that funeral orations shall not only serve to honour the "dead, but offer a salutary lesson to all men, *speak in the "name of Religion;* then your subject acquires a universal "interest, the Orator becomes a sacred moralist, who in "*one* death sees the death and nothingness of all human "grandeur."‡ He then gives several extracts from the Funeral Orations of the Fathers, two of which from Gregory

* "Apud quas [epulas] de mortui laude, cum quid *veri* erat prædicatum (*nam mentiri nefas habebatur*)....

† Essai sur l'Oraison Funèbre.

‡ M. Villemain seems here to refer to a passage in Bossuet's exordium to his celebrated Oration on the Duchess of Orleans.—"Je veux dans dans un "seul malheur déplorer toutes les calamités du genre humain, *et dans une seule "mort faire voir la mort et le nèant de toutes les grandeurs humaines.*"—I will in one single misfortune deplore all the calamities of the human race, and in one single death make you see the death and nothingness of all human grandeur.

Nazianzen, I shall read to you. St. Gregory is lamenting his brother Cesarius:—

"How long a time shall we yet have to weep over his loss? Are we not all on our way to the same resting place? Shall we not all be placed at last under the same stone? Shall we not all soon become similar ashes? What shall we gain by a little more addition to our days? Some evil more to see, to suffer, and perhaps to commit, to pay at last to Nature her inevitable debt, to follow these and precede those, to lament some and be lamented by others, and to receive from our successors the tribute of tears we have rendered to our precursors. Such is the life of all mortals; such is the scene of this world. We come out of nothing to live; living we are destroyed. What are we? An unsettled dream, a phantom which cannot be held, the wings of a flying bird, a vessel which leaves no track on the waves, dust, vapour, the flower to day flourishing, tomorrow withered!"

"This energetic description of our misery," says M. Villemain, "introduces the picture of our greatness, by one of "those singularly eloquent contrasts, of which Bossuet has "made such frequent and admirable use. Man, cast down "by weakness and mortality, is elevated by the hopes and "promises of Religion. The Orator, by a most happy im-"pulse, personally applying one of the truths of faith, trans-"ports himself to the day of resurrection, to behold his "brother. He says,—

"Then I shall see Cesarius, no longer an exile, no longer enslaved, no longer an object of tears and pity, but triumphant, glorious, and crowned; such as often, Oh! most tender and most beloved of brothers! thou hast appeared to me in dreams, whether in the illusion of my hopes, or in reality itself. But to day, leaving regrets, I will examine myself; I will discover whether I do not carry in myself, without being conscious of it, some great subject for grief. Sons of men! for it is time to address myself to you, how long will you hold insensible hearts and dull souls? will you never learn to despise the objects which attracts your eyes, and only *fix your minds on the grandeurs visible to intelligence?* And if we must afflict ourselves, why do we not rather grieve that our exile endures so long here below; that we are so long detained in these living tombs, which we bear about us? For me, this is my grief, this is the care which torments me day and night, and will not allow me to breathe in peace!"

In modern times, the custom of antiquity, has been the most nearly imitated by the French. With them, the Eloge, has been a favourite species of composition, and has been

practised by their first writers, as D'Alembert, Condorcet, and Fontenelle. The efforts of the latter are justly celebrated as of the highest order. One indeed of his countrymen, M. Suard, does not hesitate to say of his Eloges of the Academicians, that "they form the noblest monument ever raised to the glory of the Sciences and of Letters." And this praise has been adopted by a critic of our own, to whose opinion great weight is due, Dugald Stewart;* who adds, that the Eloges of D'Alembert and Condorcet, "manifest powers of a far higher order than belonged to Fontenelle; but that neither of these writers possessed Fontenelle's incommunicable art of interesting the curiosity and the feelings of his readers, in the fortunes of every individual whom he honoured by his notice. In this art, it is not improbable that they might have succeeded better, had they imitated Fontenelle's self-denial, in sacrificing the fleeting praise of brilliant colouring to the fidelity and lasting effect of their portraits; a self-denial which in *him* was the more meritorious, as his great ambition plainly was to unite the reputation of a *bel esprit* with that of a philosopher. But the principal charm of Fontenelle's Eloges arises from the pleasing pictures which they every where present of genius and learning in the scenes of domestic life." Dugald Stewart then states the effect which they produced in conjunction with his History of the Academy:—"Sciences which had long been immured in colleges and cloisters, began at length to breathe the ventilated and wholesome air of social life. The union of Philosophy and the Fine Arts, so much boasted of in the schools of ancient Greece, seemed to promise a speedy and invigorated revival. Geometry, mechanics, physics, metaphysics and morals, became objects of pursuit in courts and camps; the accomplishments of a scholar grew more and more into repute among the other characteristics of a gentleman; and (what was of still greater importance to the world) the learned discovered the secret of cultivating the graces of writing, as a necessary passport to Truth, in a refined but dissipated age." Such were the

* Preliminary Dissertation to the Supplement to the Encyc. Britt. p. 158.

immediately beneficial effects which flowed from the Eloges of Fontenelle.* The custom has ever since been continued in France, and the memory of the illustrious names of science and literature has been honoured and preserved by the eulogiums of their surviving admirers. They are the tributes rendered to departed genius by kindred spirits; they are the first fruits of the immortal fame of their illustrious subjects. They resuscitate the departed, and

> " Compel the earth and ocean to give up
> " Their dead alive."

They realize the wish of Ezekiel, and " make the dry bones live!" They cement the brotherhood of men of science and literature. They are the natural rewards of genius, and one of its most efficient stimulants. No matter how humble the rank, how limited the portion of this world's goods, or how heterodox the creed, of him who has benefited and adorned his race; when the grave terminates his meritorious labours, the Representatives of the Intellect of France, assembled in the walls of the Institute, will do homage to his memory, and commence the fame due from posterity. But these panegyrics are wisely reserved for those to whom

* Although these eulogiums were composed on fifty persons, there are only three names in the series very familiar to most of us:—Leibnitz, Newton, and Peter the Great. Those distinguished foreigners to France were members of the Academy. In the Eloge upon *our* illustrious countryman, Fontenelle has paid the English nation a high compliment. " M. Newton a eu le bonheur sin- " gulier de jouir pendant sa vie, de tout ce qu'il meritoit; bien différent de " Descartes, qui n'a reçu que des honneurs posthumes. Les Anglais n'en hon- " norent pas moins les grandes talens pour être nés chés eux; loin de chercher " a les rebaisser par des critiques injurieuses, loin d'applaudir à l'envie qui les " attaque, ils sont tous de concert à les élever; et cette grande liberté qui les " divise sur les points les plus importants, ne les empêche point de se réunir de " celui-la. *Ils sentent tous combien la gloire de l'esprit doit être prétieuse à un* " *Etat*, et qui peut la procurer à leur patrie, leur devient infiniment cher..... " Tacite qui a reproché aux Romains leur extrême indifférence pour les grands " hommes de leur nation, eût donné aux Anglais la loüange toute opposée."

The panegyric upon the illustrious sovereign of Russia is highly interesting, not only from the eloquent succinctness with which his great principles of action are developed, but from the rare circumstance of a monarch being the just subject of the eulogium of a learned society, as one of its members. The whole of this composition will well reward perusal. One of its concluding passages displays the enthusiasm of the author for his hero; but the rest of the eulogium fully supports his position. " Tous les sujets du Czar ont honoré sa mort de " larmes sinceres; *toute sa glorie avoit été utile.* Si Auguste se vantoit d'avoir " trouvé Rome de brique et de la laisser de marbre, on voit assez combien à " cet regard l'empereur Romain *est inferieur à celui de la Russie.* On vient de " lui frapper des médailles où il est appellé Pierre le Grande, *et sans doute le nom* " *de Grand lui sera confirmé par le consentement des etrangers*, necessaire pour " ratifier ces titres d'honneur donnés par des sujets à leur mâitres."

alone that fame is due, and are not deprived of all their effect by being indiscriminately lavished alike upon the evil and the good.

In our own country and literature, Funeral Orations worthy of the name, have been comparatively scarce. Thousands upon thousands, indeed, of Funeral Sermons have been preached upon obscure individuals, and many hundreds of that description have been printed; but they have been too often delivered, I regret to say, merely as the reward of the gift presented upon that condition.* The preacher has been frequently driven to great straits, and has felt himself compelled to drop all *individuality* in his portrait, and either content himself with selecting one or two favourable characteristics (omitting all the others), or else to wander in abstract generalities. Lord Brougham's description of the mode in which too many of the historians have painted the characters of eminent men, is, unfortunately, equally applicable to most of the Funeral Sermons. "The same plan," says his lordship,† "is pursued in *all* "cases. Is an able ruler and one of virtuous life to be de- "scribed? The author considers what qualities are wanting "to constitute great capacity for affairs. *So he hangs to- "gether the epithets* of wise and prudent, and vigorous and "provident; and *never fails* to bestow on the individual, "great caution in forming his plans and much promptitude "in executing them. But discrimination must be shewn. "So the author reflects how the excess of a virtue may be- "come a vice; and therefore the hero of the tale has pru- "dence without timidity—boldness without rashness—and "a great many things without a great many other things. "Accordingly we find the produce of a workmanship as "useless as it is easy, to be a set of characters all made "nearly in the same mould, without distinction of colour, "or feature, or stature; displaying the mere abstractions of "human nature, and applying almost equally, one set to

* I rather refer to the practice of times past than the present, which is not so subject to the remark: a great improvement has unquestionably taken place in this respect.

† Preface to Speeches, vol. i, page vii.

" *any* able or virtuous person, and the other to *any* person " of inferior capacity and of wicked life."

In pursuing the course, thus graphically described by Lord Brougham, the historians have perverted their august function. They have misled men; and have neutralized the effect of the check, which would otherwise have operated upon bad rulers, in the consciousness that they would be held up to the perpetual reprobaton of posterity. Truly has Mr. Fox observed, in his history of James the Second, that " the dread of posthumous infamy being the " only restraint (their conscience excepted) upon the pas- " sions of persons in situations of unlimited authority, it is " lamentable that this last resource should in any degree be " impaired." And I must be bold enough to lament, although I can easily understand, and am fully disposed to excuse, the conduct of those preachers whose sacred office imposed upon them as the first of duties the obligations of Truth and Fearlessness, but who have deprived it of its terrors, and defrauded the virtuous of the reward due to their memory, by confounding together the good and the bad in one indiscriminate eulogy. Their *motive* has very frequently been one which is kind and amiable, but is often practically weak and unjust; viz. a desire to veil the frailties of the dead. " De mortuis nil nisi *bonum*,"* " Tread lightly o'er the ashes of the dead," are proverbial expressions of a sentiment natural and useful, but, if universally applied, unjust and mischievous. For if a man have been sufficiently eminent to be a legitimate subject for public scrutiny, it is important to mankind that his character should be *thoroughly* and *truly* stated. But the truth I am afraid is, that the tendency to undue panegyric on such occasions is inevitable; and I therefore must humbly and individually protest against the practice of singling out persons as objects for Funeral Sermons, the occasion of whose decease has no particular interest, and is not calculated strongly to excite the religious or moral feelings of the audience addressed upon it. The Pulpit never ought to

* Dr. Johnson proposed to correct this expression, and substitute, " De mortuis nil nisi *verum*."

be degraded or perverted to vain flattery, or even deserved eulogium, upon individuals, to whom mankind owe no great debt for mighty moral good achieved. It should reserve itself for the *very few* of that glorious but limited Class, whose lives have been spent in effecting great moral benefits for their species; in our own days for a Clarkson.

Some Funeral Sermons delivered on occasions of mourning, adorn our Literature; containing just and beautiful sketches of character, and touchingly enforcing the vanity of earthly things, and the sanctions of Religion. Among the many great things to be found in the works of Robert Hall, there is no one piece which has been more widely and justly admired, than his Sermon on the death of the Princess Charlotte. It is an honour to English Literature; and contains passages which may be put in rivalry with the greatest efforts of the Fathers and the French Preachers. I cannot refrain, before examining the production of his model Bossuet, from calling your attention, to one of those passages.

"It is no reflection on this amiable Princess, to suppose that in her early dawn, with the *dew of her youth* so fresh upon her, she anticipated a long series of years, and expected to be led through successive scenes of enchantment, rising above each other in fascination and beauty. It is natural to suppose, she identified herself with this great nation, which she was born to govern; and that while she contemplated its pre-eminent lustre in arts and in arms, its commerce encircling the globe, its colonies diffused through both hemispheres, and the beneficial effects of its institutions extending through the whole earth, she considered them as so many component parts of her grandeur. Her heart, we may well conceive, would often be ruffled with emotions of trembling ecstacy, when she reflected that it was her province to live entirely for others, to compose the felicity of a great people, to move in a sphere which would afford scope for the exercise of philanthropy, the most enlarged, and wisdom, the most enlightened; and while others were doomed to pass through the world in obscurity, she was to supply the materials of history, and to impart that impulse to Society, which was to decide the destiny of future generations. Fired with the ambition of equalling or surpassing the most distinguished of her predecessors, she probably did not despair of reviving the remembrance of the brightest parts of their story, and of once more attaching the epoch of British glory to the annals of a female reign.* It is need-

* We may suppose these feelings to possess the breast of Her present Majesty.

less to add that the nation went with her, and probably outstript her in these delightful anticipations.

"We fondly hoped that a life so inestimable, would be protracted to a distant period; and that after diffusing the blessings of a just and enlightened administration, and being surrounded by a numerous progeny, she would gradually, in a good old age, sink under the horizon, amid the embraces of her family, and the benedictions of her country. But alas! these delightful visions are fled, and what do we behold in their room! but the funeral pall and shroud, a palace in mourning, a nation in tears, and the shadow of death settled over both like a cloud! Oh! the unspeakable vanity of human hopes! the incurable blindness of man to futurity! ever doomed to grasp at shadows, to seize with avidity what turns to dust and ashes in his hands, to sow the wind and reap the whirlwind!"*

We have had in this country, another form of public panegyric upon the departed great. I refer to the practice now, but only of late years, discontinued, of pronouncing a species of Funeral Oration, or Eloge, upon deceased members of the House of Commons, on the occasion of moving for a new writ, to the place vacated by the death of the last representative. The only Speech of Mr. Fox, I believe, ever corrected by him, and published with his sanction, was one delivered by him on such an occasion, when moving for a new writ to Tavistock, on the elevation of its then member, the present Duke of Bedford, to the House of Peers, to succeed Francis, the last Duke, the intimate friend of Mr. Fox. This speech has been considered by no means a happy effort of his genius; as too laboured and adulatory.

These are faults, which are probably inseparable from such compositions; for he who voluntarily undertakes the task of publicly praising the dead, will be one who loved or admired the object of his panegyric while living, and to whom his memory will be dear or venerable. From such an Orator, we shall look in vain for the impartiality of the Historian; as his emotions of regret for the departed, will be heightened to the most intense pitch by the recent nature of his loss; and all that is remembered, will be the virtues of the man, of which his friends or the public have been deprived. The character of individuals can doubtless only be sketched with *impartiality* by those who undertake

* Robert Hall's Works, Edited by Dr. Gregory. vol. 1, page 337-8.

the task at some distance of time from their decease. Addison has well observed that, "Persons in great stations "have seldom their true characters drawn till several years "after their deaths. Their personal friendships and enmi- "ties must cease, and the parties they were engaged in be "at an end, before their faults or their virtues can have jus- "tice done them. It is, therefore, the privilege of poste- "rity to adjust the characters of illustrious persons."* A sense of the justness of this view, and of the invidious task which would be undertaken by any one, who should venture to dispute the propriety of an eulogium on a person recently deceased, are the reasons, I presume, which have caused the discontinuance of this practice in the House of Commons. I shall enrich the Dissertation, and present a Specimen of this peculiar species of posthumous eulogy, by transcribing a few passages from Mr. Fox's celebrated speech, to which I have just referred, upon the Duke of Bedford.

"He was snatched away at a moment when society might have been expected to be long benefited by his benevolence, his energy, and his wisdom; when we had obtained a full certainty that the progress of his life would be more than answerable to the brightest hopes conceived from its outset; and when it might have been reasonably hoped, that after having accomplished all the good of which it was capable, he would have descended, not immaturely, into the tomb. He had on the one hand, lived long enough to have his character fully confirmed and established; while on the other, what remained of life seemed, according to all human expectations, to afford ample space and scope for the exercise of the virtues of which that character was composed. The tree was old enough to enable us to ascertain the quality of the fruit which it would bear, and at the same time young enough to promise years of produce. The high rank and splendid fortune of the great man, of whom I am speaking, though not circumstances which, in themselves, either can or ought to conciliate the regard and esteem of rational minds, are yet in so far considerable, as an elevated situation, by making him who is placed in it more powerful and conspicuous, causes his virtues or vices to be more useful or injurious to society. In this case, the rank and wealth of the person are to be attended to in another, and a very different point of view. To appreciate his merits justly, we must consider not only the advantages, but the disadvantages connected with such circumstances. The dangers attending prosperity in general, and high situations in particular, the influence of

* Spectator, No. 101.

flattery, to which men in such situations are more peculiarly exposed, have been the theme of moralists in all ages and in all nations: how are these dangers increased, with respect to him who succeeds in his childhood to the first rank and fortune in a kingdom such as this, and who, having lost his parents, is never approached by any being who is not represented as in some degree his inferior! Unless blessed with a heart uncommonly susceptible and disposed to virtue, how should he, who has scarce ever seen an equal, have a common feeling, and a just sympathy for the rest of mankind, who seem to have been formed rather *for* him, and as instruments of his gratification, than together *with* him, for the general purposes of nature? Justly has the Roman satirist remarked,

"Rarus enim fermè sensus communis in illâ
"Fortunâ."

This was precisely the case of the Duke of Bedford; nor do I know that his education was perfectly exempt from the defects usually belonging to such situations; *but virtue found her own way*, and on the very side where danger was the greatest, was her triumph most complete. From the blame of selfishness, no man was ever so eminently free. No man put his own gratification so low, that of others so high, in his estimation. *To contribute to the welfare of his fellow citizens, was the constant unremitted pursuit of his life;* by his example, and his beneficence, to render them better, wiser, and happier. *He truly loved the public;* but not only the public, according to the usual acceptation of the word, not merely the body corporate (if I may so express myself) which bears that name, *but man in his individual capacity:* all who came within his notice, and deserved his protection, were objects of his generous concern. From his station, the sphere of his acquaintance was larger than that of most men; yet in this extended circle, few, very few could be counted, to whom he had not found some occasion to be serviceable. *To be useful,* whether to the public at large, whether to his relations and nearer friends, or even to individuals of his species, was the ruling passion of his life. *To celebrate and perpetuate the memory of great and meritorious individuals, is in effect an essential service to the community.* It was not therefore for the purpose of performing the pious office of friendship, by fondly strewing flowers upon his tomb, that I have drawn your attention to the character of the Duke of Bedford: the motive that actuates me is one more suitable to what were *his* views. It is, that this great character may be strongly impressed upon the minds of all who hear me—that they may see it—that they may feel it—that they may discourse of it in their domestic circles—that they may speak of it to their children, and hold it up to the imitation of posterity. If he could now be sensible to what passes here below, sure I am that nothing could give him so much satisfaction as to find that we are endeavouring to make his memory and example, as he took care his *life* should be, useful to mankind."

I now proceed to the Orations of the man, whom the ge-

neral consent of critics, has placed at the head of the great masters of this peculiar species of Eloquence, the celebrated Bishop of Meaux, Bossuet. His splendid compositions, were delivered between the years 1670 and 1690, upon persons deceased, in that period, illustrious by their rank or their merits. They are distinguished by the vividness of their portraits; by the vigour with which scenes of battle and military movements, the skill with which judicial or political excellence, and the tenderness with which female piety and modesty, are sketched; by the firm and lofty tone in which the Orator displays the vanity of all earthly greatness, and warns, or exhorts, his audience, on the judgment beyond the grave. They abound in individual passages, sometimes single sentences, and even lines, of the most pointed eloquence; as for instance, when he says of Cromwell, 'that he was a man who never left anything to fortune, 'which he could possibly take away from her, by prudence 'and foresight;' or of Maria Theresa, that, 'she was humble, not only amidst greatness, but even amidst her virtues;' or of Condé, that, 'by a sort of admirable instinct, 'of which men know not the secret, he seemed born to enchain Fortune in his designs, and even to force Destiny itself.' But against the enthusiastic praises which he has received from the French Critics, I must in one particular enter my humble but decided protest. Almost every one of his Orations is disfigured by fulsome flattery of persons of royal blood,* and especially of Louis XIV;† and sometimes for the most tyrannical acts of his reign.‡ This example was followed by almost all,§ and sometimes even by

* This weakness is perceptible in all his Orations; but more particularly in the one (which contains passages of great tenderness and beauty) on Henrietta Maria, Queen of Charles I.

† "Le Roi, dont le jugement est une règle toujours sûre, a estimé la capacité de cette princesse, et l'a mise par son estime au-dessus de tous nos éloges." —Oraison sur la Duchesse d'Orleans. "Il faut satisfaire aux ordres du plus grand de tous le rois."—Oraison sur Condé. And see a most laboured piece of flattery of Louis, in the Oration on Marie Thérese.

‡ "La révocation du fameux édit de Nantes; ce triomphe de la foi et un si beau monument de la piété du roi!"—Oraison sur Michel le Tellier.

§ The dignitary of the Church, in those days, in whose writings are to be found the boldest truths and reproofs, was the glorious Archbishop of Cambrai, Fenelon. In his famous work, Telemaque, he has pointed out the errors of Louis; but when we reflect that he was not only tutor to Louis's son, the Duke of Burgundy, but that that very work itself was expressly written for the use of

his celebrated rival in fame, Massillon.* It disgraces the Oration in many respects a fine, and in some an honest,† one pronounced by him on Louis himself. Thus the Preacher, in whose eye sovereigns and subjects ought to be regarded alike, as erring creatures, has the audacity, in an early part of his exordium, while claiming to speak as the minister of God, to describe the vain, heartless, and bigoted monarch, in the following terms. "This King, the terror of his neighbours, the *astonishment of the world*, the father of Kings, greater than all his ancestors, more magnificent than Solomon in all his glory, acknowledged, like him, that all was vanity."‡

It may be said, as it has been, that this was the fault of the age. No doubt; the men of genius, who have rendered that æra so brilliant, flattered the monarch, as Horace and Virgil flattered Augustus. What then? Although I admit that a fault of the age, is entitled to full indulgence, when it refers to style, or mere manners, or even to such matters of faith, or morals, as do not affect the *whole character;* yet on points where a high tone of moral feeling, and independence of soul, are involved; I demand what *is* to constitute a great man, *unless* it be his *superiority* over the age he lived in, and which qualified him, to instruct the posterity, of whom he was one in spirit?

It is by this distinction we must decide, that Lord Bacon was, in Physics so great, and in Morals so small, a man. It

his pupil; we shall probably arrive at the conclusion, that the great prelate rather gave the general result of his observations, and the unconscious effect they produced on his mind, by so close a proximity to the monarch, than intended any express and obvious personal satire upon him.

* In his Sermons, properly so called, Massillon seems to have been sometimes bold enough. There is a well known story of Louis, who after hearing him preach, once said; "Father, I have heard many great Orators in this chapel—I have been highly pleased with them—but for you, whenever I hear you, *I go away displeased with myself*, for I see more of my own character."

† The evils of *war* are eloquently and courageously described; such a topic in a French audience, required considerable boldness in the speaker. He also attacks what he calls "the barbarous practice" of duelling. Nor is the general corruption of the times spared.

‡ This of the man, whom Mr. Fox has well described (Life of James the Second, ch. ii.) as, "having made it the business of his life to raise the fabric of his power at the expense of every sentiment of tenderness to his subjects, and of justice and good faith to foreign nations!" And in whose Court says Madame La Fayette (called by Dugald Stewart a nice and reflecting observer), "nothing was thought of but intrigues and pleasures!"

is by this distinction, we must say, that regarded in a moral aspect, Washington was so great, and Napoleon so small, a man. A fault of the age, to flatter Louis! Yes; and so it was a fault of the age, to offer incense to Pagan deities, and even to living emperors, after the light of Christianity had dawned upon the world; so it was a fault of the age, to buy indulgences of Leo, when Luther shook the Papal throne; so it was a fault of the age, to follow with obsequious alertness the vacillations of our monarchs, when the martyrs of Protestantism walked to the stake; so it was a fault of the age, to submit, with cheerful servility, to the degrading rule of Charles, when Russell bled; so it was a fault of the age, to abet the atrocities of the Slave Trade, when Clarkson denounced them, in the indignant spirit of a Christian Freeman; and so has it been, unhappily, a fault of the age, ever to treat with contempt or martrydom, the early efforts of all who have struggled for the "Right!"

In the limited examination of Bossuet's Orations, alone within the scope of such an inquiry as the present, I shall confine myself to his two finest productions; viz. those on the Duchess of Orleans, and the Prince of Condé. The subject of the first-named Oration was the daughter of Charles I., and married the only brother of Louis XIV. She was poisoned by the agents of the Duke of Lorraine, whose exile she had caused. Bossuet pronounced his Oration upon her, at St. Denis, in 1670. In presenting it to a friend, he informed him, that, 'its object, was to ex-'hibit the nothingness of this world.' M. Chateaubriand says of it, 'that the interest inspired by the death of a prin-'cess, in the flower of her age, seems not capable of pro-'ducing a lasting impression; all consists in some common 'place contrasts of beauty, youth, grandeur, and death; but 'it is on this barren foundation, that Bossuet has built one 'of the most beautiful monuments of Eloquence. It is 'thence he has demonstrated the misery of man, regarded 'as a perishable creature, and his greatness, when viewed 'as an immortal being.'

The great point of this Oration, is disclosed in the text, which is the celebrated declaration of the philosophic King

of Judæa; "vanity of vanities, all is vanity." The exordium is a fine commentary upon this text, although, I confess, I think the orator has missed a striking point suggested by it; I mean the peculiar force with which such a reflection proceeded from the man who made it. Endowed with a mighty genius, which was cultivated to such an extent as to put him in possession of all the knowledge of his day; and enabled by that first of powers, to acquire absolute regal sway and boundless stores of wealth, which procured him the enjoyment of every pleasure which earth can bestow, and which he indulged to satiety; the illustrious monarch of Judæa, was well qualified to enforce upon men the salutary lesson, how all the fruits they covet so eagerly, turn to dust and ashes in their mouth, when rashly enjoyed; and to offer a warning to those, who never can arrive at his result, from their own limited experience, or the happy constitution of their temper, and the enviable fortune of their lot, how vain is all reliance upon human grandeur, or sensual pleasures, for the true and lasting sources of content! Bossuet refers to the words with which Solomon begins the book of Ecclesiastes, and to those with which he concludes it. He then proceeds—

"We all resemble flowing streams. Upon whatever high titles men may pride themselves, they have all the same origin, and that origin is small. Their years drive each other on successively like waves, ever on the advance; so that at last, after having made a little more noise and traversed a few more countries, some than the other, they are all mingled together in depths where no one can recognize princes, kings, or any other of the proud characters which distinguish men; just as the most famous rivers remain without name and without glory, lost in the ocean with streams the most unknown."

After forcibly explaining this view, of the vanity of earthly glory, in a variety of points, he proceeds to consider the real dignity, and elevated destiny, of man:—

"You must then, Christians, reflect, that beside the relation which we have on the side of our body with a changing and mortal nature, we have on the other side an intimate relation and a secret affinity with God; because God himself *has instilled something into us which may confess the truth of his being;* may adore his perfection and admire his plentitude; something which may submit itself to

his sovereign power, abandon itself to his high and incomprehensible wisdom: confide in his bounty, fear his justice, and hope in his Eternity. On this side, if man believes in his own elevation, he will not be deceived; for as it is necessary that every thing should be reunited to its principal, it follows that that which carries the divine mark in us, that which is capable of uniting itself to GOD, must be there also reunited. And is not that which must return to GOD, who is essential grandeur, great, and elevated? This is why, when I have told you that grandeur and glory were only amongst us pompous names, void of sense and fact, I referred to the bad use we made of these terms; but to speak the truth in all its extent, it is not error or vanity which has invented these magnificent names; on the contrary, *we should never have found them if we did not bear the seeds of those things in ourselves; for how could we have derived those noble ideas from nothing?* Leave then time and change; aspire to Eternity; vanity will no longer hold you enslaved!"

The Oration on Louis de Bourbon, Prince de Condé, was pronounced in the Cathedral of Notre Dame, in the year 1687. This celebrated prince was one of the most chivalrous warriors who ever rushed into the field of battle. Most of you are probably aware of the anecdote of his daring courage at the battle of Fribourg. Finding his men give way, Condé threw his commander's baton into the enemy's ranks, and precipitated himself into the midst of them; when the French rushing forward to regain it, obtained the victory. De Fontanes has beautifully sketched the scene of Bossuet delivering this celebrated Oration.—"When Bossuet ascended the pulpit to praise Condé, the "country in mourning deplored the recent loss of their "hero. The eulogium of a whole people responded to that "of the orator. And by how many spectacles was the ora-"tor himself inflamed! His first look fell on the remains "of a great man, the commemoration of whom was en-"trusted to him by the public voice. The relations and "friends of the illustrious dead, his most faithful servants, "all who had heard his last words, were present at the fu-"neral. At no great distance his veteran soldiers, com-"panions of his victories, were weeping, leaning on those "arms which had triumphed over Europe. On the report "of this funeral ceremony the world had suspended its "spectacles and feasts; the men of the world had become

" devout; the rich and the poor, the subject and the prince, " instructed together in this school upon the death which " levels all conditions, offered the same prayers, humiliated " themselves in the same dust; and, partaking the same " fears, and the same hopes, pressed with their knees the " pavement of that temple which was covered with the epi- " taphs of times long gone by and with promises of a new " life. The arts had adorned with all their pomp, the Mau- " soleum which enclosed his august spoils. Above they " fancied the soul of the hero was hovering attentive to the " worship of France. In this imposing scene, Bossuet, full " of glory and of years, uttered his pathetic accents; and all " hearts were unmoved. Scarcely had his voice been raised, " than the Temple, covered with crape, seemed to become " more sombre. That sublime voice redoubled the majes- " ty of the sanctuary and the terrors of the tomb. All the " sorrows of earth and all the joys of heaven were revealed " successively on his brow, in his looks, in his voice, in his " gestures, and in all his movements. In exciting the tears " of the spectator, he wept himself, and incessantly agitated " with contrary sensations, plunging in the depths of death " and eternity, mingling consolations with terror, he pro- " claimed at once the nothingness and grandeur of man, be- " tween a tomb ready to swallow him, and the bosom of a " God ready to receive him."

Bossuet had been a very intimate friend of the great Condé;* and this oration evidently proceeded as much from the warm gushings of his heart, as from the efforts of his genius. He terminated his oratorical career by it, and it is his chef d'œuvre. The Cardinal de Bausset well observes of it,—" Whatever Religion has most august and most sacred, " history most imposing, eloquence most noble and majestic, " poesy most touching, are all united in that admirable " composition." I recommend its complete and attentive perusal to every student now present; but I must confine myself to selecting a few passages. After describing the battle of Rocroi, (which was fought by Condé, in defiance of

* Most probably Condé is extravagantly praised; I have already explained the inevitable tendency in the Orator on such an occasion.

the commands of the King, and the Marshal L'Hospital,) with great spirit, Bossuet thus remarks on his reception at court by the King and Queen:—

"If any others *dared* to praise him, he repelled their praises as an insult, and unyielding to flattery, he was afraid even of an approach to it; such were the delicacy or rather the solidity of this Prince. And it was one of his maxims *(listen! it is the maxim which makes great men)* that in great actions it is right only to think of doing well *and to let glory follow virtue.* This is what he inspired into others, this is what he acted upon himself. Thus false glory tempted him not; all tended to the True and Great."

The Orator then summarily refers to Condé's campaigns in Flanders and Germany, and says,

"Like lightning in a moment, he was present in the most distant places. He was seen in all attacks and in all quarters. When occupied on one side, he flies to reconnoitre the other; the diligent officer who carries his orders is surprised to be outrun, and finds everything already animated by the presence of the Prince; *he appears to multiply himself in the action*; neither steel nor fire can stay him."

Bossuet then details the amiable character of the Hero, and exclaims—

"*Far be from us heroes without humanity!* they may indeed force our respect and command our admiration, as all extraordinary objects do; but they will not win our hearts..... See the Hero, who, always equal to himself, without raising himself to appear great, without lowering himself to be civil and obliging, *is naturally all which he ought to be* towards all men; like a majestic and beneficent river which carries peaceably into the towns the abundance which it has previously created in the fields; which gives itself to the world, and never overflows nor becomes ruffled, except when violently opposed in the tranquil current of its course. Such was the mildness and such the force of the Prince of Condé."

The Orator than returns to the characteristics of the Prince, as a general and warrior, detailing many of his maxims, and comparing him with Turenne. In the course of this spirited sketch, which makes our blood quicken in the veins, as we see the impetuous hero blazing in the van amid the roar and carnage of battle, is the following passage:—

"But if ever he appeared an extraordinary man, if ever he appeared enlightened and tranquilly to observe everything, *it was in those rapid moments on which victories hang*, and in the heat of bat-

tle. On everything then he deliberates, he lends his ears docilely to all councils; here all is present to him at once; the multitude of objects does not confound him; as soon as his part is taken, he commands and acts together, and everything proceeds in harmony and security. In the firing, the shock, and the onset, you see all at once a something, so complete, so fixed, so lively, so ardent, so soft, so attentive, to his own men, and so proud and defying to his enemies, that one is at a loss to conceive whence such an assemblage of opposite qualities could proceed. Those who fought near him have often assured me, that if they had wished to talk to him on some important affair, they would have chosen those moments when everything was blazing around him; *so much was his spirit then raised*, so much did his soul then appear, as if enlightened from above in these terrible encounters! Like those lofty mountains whose tops above clouds and tempests find serenity in their elevation, and lose no ray of the light which surrounds them."

The Oration concludes with this splendid and touching Peroration:—

"Come then, ye people, come now; but rather come, ye princes and lords, and ye who judge the earth, and ye who open to men the gates of Heaven, and ye, more than all others, princes and princesses, noble decendants of so many kings, lights of France, but to day obscured and covered with your griefs like a cloud, come and see the little which remains to us of so illustrious a birth, of so much grandeur and glory; throw your eyes around on all sides, behold all that magnificence and piety have done to honour a Hero; titles, inscriptions, vain marks of that which exists no longer; figures which seem to weep round the tomb; and the fragile images of a grief which time must carry away with all the rest; the columns which seem to wish to convey to Heaven the magnificent witness of our nothingness, and to which at last the only thing wanting in all these honours is he to whom they are rendered! Weep, then, over these weak remains of human life; weep over that sad immortality which we give to heroes. For me, if it be permitted to me, after all the others, to come and render the last duties to you, O Prince! the worthy theme of our praises and regrets, you will live eternally in my memory! your image will be there traced, not with that air of heroic ardour which presaged your victories! no, *I do not wish to see in you anything which death will efface!* you shall have in that image immortal traits; I will behold you as you were in your last moments under the hand of God, when his glory seemed to open upon you. It is there I will see you more triumphant than at Fribourg and at Rocroi; and enraptured with so great a victory, I will repeat in thanksgiving those fine words of the well-beloved disciple—'The true victory, that which 'puts under our feet the whole world, is faith.' Instead of deploring the death of others, great Prince, I will learn from you to make my own death holy; happy, if warned by these grey hairs of

the account I must render of my ministry, I reserve for the flock, to whom I owe the words of life, what yet remains to me of a voice that is failing, and of an ardour which decays!"

Similar Orations upon Condé, were composed by Massillon and Bourdaloue. They justly enjoy considerable fame; but they are, in my opinion, inferior productions to Bossuet's. The first of these great writers, stands at the head of French Preachers, for Sermons, properly so called. I admit the justice of the decision, which has placed him there; I concur in the eulogiums of D'Alembert, Voltaire and Dr. Blair. But in that *peculiar* species of Pulpit Eloquence, which we are now considering, I confess, I think him inferior to Bossuet. I shall present specimens of each of the rival Orations. Massillon places Condé in a high point of view, in the following passage:—

"The great think, that every thing is made for *them*, and that other men are only born to bear the weight either of their pride or of their caprices. The Prince of Condé only exercised his authority on himself. What depths of goodness, and of sweetness, towards his dependents! requiring scarcely anything for himself, never thinking of their faults whilst he alone suffered from them, rather desiring sometimes to suffer from their want of ability, than to distress their tenderness; never betraying any irritation, nor carried away by any fit of impetuosity, which should shew that so great a spirit had lost its natural firmness; and carrying so far his natural goodness, that the affection, so entire, of his dependents alone prevented the abuse which they might have made of it; appearing rather their friend than their master; dispensing with those severe duties required more by custom than by necessity; viewing them as the companions of his fortune, and not as the sport or ministers of his humours or passions; and making us all see (most rare thing!) that the great can find friends, even among them who are their servants."

The following sketch in Bourdaloue's Oration, of Condé's military talents is, I think, extremely spirited, and in admirable keeping with the fiery character of his illustrious subject:

"The principle of his great exploits, was that martial ardour, which without either rashness or haste made him dare and undertake everything; that fire, which in execution, made everything possible and easy; that firmness of soul which no obstacle ever stayed, which no danger ever alarmed, which no resistance impeded; that foresight which nothing escaped, that depth of penetration with which in the most hazardous circumstances he saw from

afar everthing that could derange or favour the event; like an eagle whose piercing sight discovers in an instant the extent of a vast country; that promptitude of decision, which never degenerated into rashness, and which without the evils of the slowness of others had all its usefulness; that science, which he practised so well, and which rendered him so ready to take advantage of circumstances, to foresee the designs of the enemy before they had even been formed, and not to lose in vain deliberations those happy moments which decide the fate of battles; that unrivalled activity, which in the day of battle, dividing him and multiplying him as it were, enabled him to be everywere, to support and rally everything, soldier and general at once, and by his presence inspiring into the whole body of the army, even to its very lowest members, his own dauntless valour; that cool collectedness, which he knew so well how to preserve in the very heat of battle; that tranquillity, of which, he was never more secure than in the thickest horrors of the fight; that moderation, and that care for his men, which redoubled as his fierceness was excited against the enemy; that complete forgetfulness of his own person, which never heeded remonstrance, and made him always consider it a duty to risk his life, and a pleasure to confront death; this is the lively portrait which each of you at this moment sees before his eyes of the prince whom we have lost, and this is what makes heroes!"

Doubtless; but there are qualities higher than these, and men greater than Heroes. The preceding sketch, I confess, strongly excites me, as in my mind's eye, I see the collected Hero; but I am more touched by the following passage, in Mascaron's Oration on the twin-military-star of France, the great Turenne. War is there put upon its proper base, not as a brilliant origin of honour to be sought and desired, but as, unhappily, sometimes a necessary curse.

"Yes, sirs," says the Orator, "this great Captain ardently desired peace. He saw with pain the evils which the necessity of war draws after it.* He left to mediocre virtues those cowardly compromises, which in order to give lasting reputation to one man, cause the enduring misery of states; and careless whether he were endowed with those faculties which might make him even yet more admirable in private life, than at the head of armies; he hastened to deprive himself by the rapidity of his victories, of the very occasion for his services. At the interview of the two Kings [of France and Spain] he was far more affected by the public rejoiceings with which the French and Spaniards solemnized the birth of peace and the hope of plenty, than by the tribute which the King

* The Dispatches of the Duke of Wellington, and his memorable declaration of his horror and fear of a civil war in Ireland, display the same characteristic in our great Captain.

of Spain rendered to his glory, when, pressed by the force of truth, he confessed in the presence of the two Courts, that the victories of Turenne had made him pass wretched days and sleepless nights; he whose haughty pride scarcely allowed him to admit that the care of that mighty empire on which the sun never sets was able to disturb his repose."*

Such are the chief of the most celebrated Funeral Orations in Literature. We know that the great men who delivered them, excited the most vivid impression upon their auditors and contemporaries; and they have been warmly and justly admired by all critics from the time of their delivery to the present. They appeal forcibly, yet touchingly, to those common principles of our nature, wherein the Prince and the Peasant, are equally susceptible to the influence of the Moralist and the Orator. They weep over sorrows common to us all. They touch a chord of sympathy which vibrates in every bosom; for the liability to the griefs bewailed is incident to all alike. The electric shock is felt by all men; for who of the children of dust, has not lamented the loss of a parent, a wife, a brother, or a friend? High or low, rich or poor, learned or illiterate, just or unjust, we are "all equally subject to pay our full contingent to the contributions levied on mortality." From that, no virtue, no power can protect us; we are "all among the unhappy." These Orations are the eloquent expression of the deep grief with which it is the nature of man instinctively to regard Death. They are flowers of the mind strewn over the grave. They result from that feeling of our nature, so elegantly pourtrayed in the Arabian Nights,† in the touching verses, inscribed upon the tomb of a lover, "were I able, oh Tomb! I would make of thee a garden, and water it with my streaming tears."

* I must summarily reccommend the student of this peculiar species of eloquence, to the perusal of other of the French Writers, as Flechier, &c. It is to be regretted, I think, that there is no English Translation or Edition of the great French Funeral Orations, at all worthy of the originals. Such an undertaking would be an elegant and entertaining task for a gentleman of letters and of leisure, and would supply a desideratum in our Literature. The late Mr. Charles Butler (of Lincoln's Inn), has written an interesting sketch of the Life and Writings of Bossuet, and has devoted a section to an examination of his Funeral Orations; but it is very short and meagre. (See Philological and Biographical Works. vol. iii, page 276.)

† Tale of Azeez and Azeezeh. No. 9, of the recent splendid edition.

Nor are they only of universal interest, in their affecting lamentations; but equally so, in their impassioned warnings, and heart-stirring appeals. For few indeed, are they, in whose hearts the rightful sovereignty of virtue, and the degrading tendencies of vice, are not admitted; whose "better nature" does not bow before the grand truths of Religion; and by whom (however generally depraved their conduct) the "still small voice" of Conscience is not sometimes heard. The Brigand kneels before the Cross by the way-side, and lets the Pilgrim pass. The eloquent preachers have seized hold of the moment when the heart was wounded or appalled by the stroke of the arrow of Death, which had reached some beloved or venerated object, to soften it to the influences of Religion. Nor have they stopt here. They have lamented the inevitable lot of humanity, and while weeping over the dead, have warned and reproved the living; but they have also aroused and urged them by an appeal to the common yearnings of men for a life beyond the grave. The distractions of daily cares and toils, may suspend its operation, but there lies that dormant feeling, ever capable of being awakened by the voice of the Orator. "It is appointed unto all men once to die;" but who can believe *for ever?* For, what though the king of terrors be apparently undisputed possessor of his victim; what though the lips be sealed, from which accents of power and of love were wont to flow; what though the monumental marble, be all that remains to image the form on which we have doated; and what though that bosom be cold which has so often beat with ours in the unison of ardent and sympathizing affection; yet still a heavenly monitor within forbids us to yield to the suggestions of the senses, and commands us to defy the power of Death. The indestructible instinct of the human soul, an aspiration towards a futurity of ever-increasing power and happiness; the 'longing after immortality' which has been implanted in us with such force and constancy; the upward and onward tendency bestowed on our nature by its beneficent Creator; "os homini sublime dedit, cœlumque tueri jussit;" have in all ages and in every clime pointed to that world hereafter,

where "tears are wiped from every eye, where the wicked cease from troubling, and where the weary are at rest!" An undecaying, an irrepressible principle, animates us all to feel that we can

"The darkening universe defy
"To quench our immortality;
"Or shake our trust in GOD!"

On the spots consecrated to the repose of the dead, men have planted the mournful, but the *evergreen*, cypress and yew; the emblems at once of their sorrow, for the temporary bereavement, and of their assured hopes of final reunion.

The Orations of the great Preachers are distinguished by the same characteristics. Their mournful tone is the utterance of the sorrow of the human heart for Death; but as the orator and his hearers become more and more fixed upon the mighty theme, that solemn cadence gradually dies away; the chant of joyfulness opens and deepens, and in their ears "sounds seraphic ring," while amid the clouds which darkened their earthly view, visions of future glory rise in growing effulgence, and the Great Truth is at last vividly felt, that the Grave can win no victory, and that Death is without a sting!

THE END.

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